

Now, in order to fix this, Representative MANZULLO and myself have introduced the Internet Radio Equality Act, it's H.R. 2060, and this bill would fix this problem by doing something that appears eminently fair to me, which would simply have the same rate to be paid by Internet-based Webcasters as broadcasters now pay over satellite radio, over cable radio and over juke boxes.

□ 2000

What we are simply saying is that we ought to have equality, fairness, that is why we named it the Radio Equality Act, by having parity, the same level, which is 7.5 percent of revenue, a transition rate, in 2010. This is something that is fair, equal, and economically realistic to allow 70 million Americans to continue to enjoy their radio over the Internet. And now, 128 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives have cosponsored this bill just in a matter of a month or two; and the reason they have done so is I think they have heard from their constituents who want to keep their service going and realize how ridiculously out of whack this particular decision was.

Now, I know it may surprise some Americans to know that government agencies can make mistakes, but certainly one was made here and we need to fix it, and we need to fix it quickly. On July 15, this decision will go into effect. I encourage my colleagues to look at this bill, H.R. 2060, the Internet Radio Internet Equality Act, and cosponsor it to add their voices to the choir to demand action by the legislature to fix this bureaucratic foul-up.

Obviously, this is supported by a large number of people, not just broadcasters. National Public Radio certainly has an interest in this. I know that many of my constituents enjoy it, and it is in great jeopardy tonight if we don't act. I know one station has already gone off the air because of this bureaucratic snafu. The NPR affiliate Rock Island Illinois-based WVIK served hundreds of thousands of citizens. They have switched off their Web stream because this is an economically untenable situation for them if it is not fixed. So what their constituents and their customers are now hearing over the Internet is silence. Silence may be better than some of the music my kids have listened to over the years, but it is not better than the thousands of stations and access that people have over the Internet. We want to keep that available for Americans.

I also want to say that why I think this is so important is diversity. One of the best things about the Internet is it gives you what you want, not what the broadcaster wants you to listen to. And, frankly, because of the consolidation of the industry and the radio over-the-air industry, we are hearing a lot more of the same thing over and over and over again. And some of it is great music. We are still stuck in the 1960s, many of us, and we enjoy it, but diver-

sity and having access to Appalachian bluegrass or music from the subcontinent of India; I heard of a genre, it was basically heavy metal, hip-hop, country at the same time, and that is quite a genre. But this provides diversity for people, and they ought to have their multiple tastes enjoyed and that is really in jeopardy tonight.

Now, the other thing I want to say is that this decision will go into effect July 15, and these stations will be in great economic jeopardy beginning just in a week or so; and, unfortunately, some of them as of July 15 might shut off their streaming. Others are going to start to consider what to do. Some may consider going offshore, which is not a healthy situation for us for a variety of reasons.

But I want to assure the parties who might be involved in discussions in this that after July 15 it will not be the end of this discussion. If Congress is unable to act before July 15 and if the parties don't reach some resolution of this, July 15 will not be the end of this effort. It will not be the beginning of the end of this effort; it might be the end of the beginning of this effort, because as these stations start to shut down, Congress will be deluged more than they have already been deluged with voices of protestation exercising their right to petition their government for redress of grievances, and one of the biggest grievances people are going to have is they can't hear their radios over the Internet anymore. The 128 cosponsors we have today even before the sword of Damocles has fallen on the music is going to grow, and we are going to be back here to continue to grow this until we get relief.

So I am hopeful that the parties are talking to one another to try to reach an economically viable and fair resolution of this so that artists, performers, songwriters can continue to have a meaningful economic model, so they can continue to do their work and they will be compensated for it; that Webcasters can have an economic model to allow them to stream it over the Web, and 70 million Americans can continue to enjoy the pursuit of happiness over the Internet listening to this great music. If that does not happen by July 15, we are going to be back here until it gets resolved and this chorus, this drumbeat will continue. We do not intend to let, in the words of Don McLean's song, not allow the music to die. It is, too, a part of the American culture, and I will encourage my colleagues to help out by cosponsoring this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

STEAL AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES ACT, THE SEQUEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WILSON of Ohio). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to discuss with the Members here assembled and those listening on C-SPAN and those who will be reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an issue that may well be determined here on the House floor in the next few weeks, at least perhaps in this session if not in the next few weeks. It is an issue that will fundamentally alter and I would say dramatically diminish a constitutionally protected right and will have tremendous long-term consequences for our country; yet, very few people in this country know that this issue is coming before us. Very few of our Members even understand that an issue of this significance will be discussed here. But there will be a fight, and there is an issue of great importance that will emerge here in the not-too-distant future.

The fight over this issue of course is not a new fight. In the late 1990s, similar attempts were made at what will be attempted in the next few weeks. Those attempts were made, but they were defeated. They were defeated after the public was mobilized, and powerful forces that were at play here in our Nation's Capital were defeated. Without the public mobilizing against this particular change that was being proposed by the corporate elite here in Washington, our system of technology in the United States would have been dramatically impacted and the well-being of our people in the long run would be condemned.

The battle, which took place in the 1990s, lasted for years. Corporate pressure was brought to bear, and every attempt was made to accomplish what I consider to be an insidious goal through stealth, and it was being done in a way that would keep as low a profile as possible. We see that happening today. Very few of our Members know that there is an issue of this magnitude coming before us, but special interests are already at play. We see people, we see organizations being well financed to come here and talk to us about technology issues, not realizing the real purpose of these organizations and the financing behind them is to push forward a change that will dramatically impact America's ability to be the technological leader of the world and dramatically implicate our innovators and our inventors.

The American people, however, back in the 1990s, once alerted and made aware of the significance to our country of the changes that were being proposed, stood up and fought the good fight and beat back this attempt for fundamental change in a stealth manner. They in fact beat back the onslaught, but just barely. However, once the American people were made aware of the significance of what was going on, they won the day.

Does it sound familiar? Yes, it sounds tremendously familiar if you look at what just happened with the immigration bill in which the elites of this country were trying to foist upon us a